Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

# Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01649 131157Z
ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
----------131201Z 016686 /14
P 131137Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2159

S E C R E T DAMASCUS 1649

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM MURPHY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SY, US
SUBJECT: CARTER-ASAD MEETING

1. AFTER DISCUSSION HIS OWN VISIT TO WASHINGTON AS OUTLINED STATE 56009, KHADDAM ASKED IF USG HAD REACHED ANY CONCLUSION RE TIME AND PLACE FOR CARTER-ASAD MEETING. REPLIED I HAD NO INFORMATION ON THIS.

2. KHADDAM THEN SAID THAT SARG UNDERSTOOD PRESIDENT CARTER HAD BEEN INVITED TO VISIT RUMANIA. "WOULD THE US SIDE SEE IT POSSIBLE TO HAVE THE TWO PRESIDENTS MEET IN BUCHAREST?" HE NOTED THAT THIS WAS "NOT (RPT NOT) A BLACK AND WHITE SITUATION AND ASAD WAS OF COURSE NOT INSISTING ON BUCHAREST AS A MEETING SITE."

3. KHADDAM ASKED I RELAY THIS AS SYRIAN SUGGESTION. I PROMISED REPLY ASAP.

4. COMMENT. UK EMBOFF TOLD US YESTERDAY THAT PRIMIN CALLAGHAN HAD JUST EXTENDED INVITATION TO ASAD TO VISIT LONDON IN EARLY JUNE. ARRIVAL DATE PROPOSED WAS FOR THE DAY BETWEEN THE ENDING OF THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT AND OPENING OF
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PAGE 02 DAMASC 01649 131157Z

THE NATO MEETING WHICH PRESIDENT CARTER HAS ANNOUNCED HE WILL ATTEND. KHADDAM MADE NO REFERENCE TO CALLAGHAN INVITATION BUT I SUSPECT HE ASSUMES BRITISH INVITATION WAS FIRST STEP IN ARRANGING ASAD-CARTER MEETING IN LONDON.

5. ALTHOUGH SITUATION MAY NOT RPT NOT BE "BLACK AND WHITE", TO USE KHADDAM'S WORDING, THE MESSAGE COMES THROUGH CLEARLY

Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

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THAT ASAD WOULD FIND IT AWKWARD TO CONTEMPLATE VISITING
LONDON AT THAT TIME. HE WOULD PROBABLY SEE IT AS GETTING TOO
TARRED WITH THE WESTERN BRUSH, PARTICULARLY THAT OF NATO.

6. ON THE OTHER HAND, ASAD IS A PERENNIAL, ALMOST CASUAL,
VISITOR TO BUCHAREST. HE MOST RECENTLY SAW CEAUCESCU
IN FEBRUARY. FOR ASAD BOTH BUCHAREST AND BELGRADE HAVE BEEN
COMFORTABLE HALF-WAY POINTS AT THIS STAGE IN SYRIA'S OWN OPENING
TO THE WEST. YOU WILL RECALL HIS ONLY PREVIOUS OFFICIAL
VISIT TO A WESTERN CAPITAL WAS TO PARIS IN JUNE 1976.
MURPHY

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